

# Seeing Stars

by Alley Cat Sunflower

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Summary: "If it's the festival of bathing and your crush is nowhere to be found, don't ever, ever assume that she's notâ€| busy." Hiccup ends up in a series of awkward situations brought on by a borrowed book and a midsummer festival. T for implications. I do not own How To Train Your Dragon! \*SUSPENDED.\*

## 1. Monday

There's a part of me that really, really likes running for my lifeâ€| but only when Astrid's the one chasing me. And it took a borrowed book and a pointless festival for me to figure that out.

There is exactly one week in the middle of summer when it's actually almost what you could consider warm. And, since no one has to go to as much trouble to warm up the bath water, bathing becomes a lot more common. Over the centuries, this has led to a tradition of a midsummer celebration for hardly any reason at all. After all, in Berk, the only time there's a reason to be clean is if it's a special occasionâ€|and if there isn't one, one has to be made, since no one can just be clean because they feel like personal hygiene is important. (I should know. I've been teased about my weekly baths for years.)

Anyway, it was the night of the first day of the festival. The morning of that day, Astrid had asked me to lend her the Book of Dragonsâ€|not an unusual request, since the girl has serious studying issues. She's trying to memorize the whole thing, so it annoys her whenever I need to modify it to fit in some new discovery, which happens a lot. It's not my fault I'm constantly on the hunt for new information! But I'd like to see you tell her that.

After a full day of soaring around Berk on Toothless and practicing various tricks in midair, I suddenly remembered that I'd promised to lend Fishlegs the Book so he could try to learn to draw dragons. It

wouldn't be too hard to get it back from Astrid, right? Wrong. If it's the festival of bathing and your crush is nowhere to be found, don't ever, \_ever\_ assume that she's notâ€| busy.

"Hey, uh, Astrid?" I asked, knocking on her door and opening it. No one in the front room. "I, uh, need my book back," I added, stumbling up the stairs. Her bedroom door was ajar, so I pushed it gently open. Suddenly, I got an eyeful of Astridâ€"not facing me, thank the godsâ€"sitting in a tub of water, pale hair brushed and hanging straight. My jaw dropped: I had seen what no other boy in Berk had seen. Astrid never let down her hair in front of \_anyone\_ else. Out of its messy braid, it was much, much longer than I expected, reaching almost to the ground.

Let's not forget the fact that Astrid was probably not wearing much of anything. Well, not anything at all. That definitely occurred to me, too. Okay, maybe it was the first and foremost thought in my head the entire time. Just maybe.

Of course, the door chose that exact moment to emit the loudest creak you've ever heard, and she whipped her head around to face me. I thought I'd see fury on her face, like usual, but instead her eyes widened wider than I've ever seen them (and I saw her when she first rode a dragon, so that's saying something). The situation couldn't have looked too good for me, since I was just standing there and staring slack-jawed at the scene before me. How was she supposed to know I hadn't seen anything?

There was an extremely pregnant pause. Both of us were completely tongue-tied, for very different reasons.

Eventually, Astrid croaked, "Get out."

My legs were trembling. I couldn't move them.

"Leave!" she reiterated in a yell, when I failed to get out. I left. Well, 'left' is a bit of an understatementâ€"I was out of that house faster than you could say \_Toothless.\_

"I'm going to die!" I shrieked as I ran through the forest, then repeated the phrase under my ragged breath all the way to the place I met my dragon. Even he couldn't exactly help the situation. Astrid was going to murder meâ€"that was the simple truth of it. All thoughts of the \_Book of Dragons\_ completely left my mind as I rocked back and forth nervously, just waiting for her to turn up, battle-axe in hand, and pin me to the nearest tree by the throat.

I waited for maybe half an hour of imagining all the possible ways Astrid could kill me (punctuated by moments when I remembered as if realizing for the first time that Astrid wasn't wearing anything, even if I hadn't seen much). When no raging girl emerged from the woods to slaughter me, I breathed a sigh of cautious relief and turned my feet back to Berk. Maybe, just maybe, I could make my apologies to Fishlegs and get a good night's sleep, hopefully uninterrupted by a murderous Astrid.

I let out an extremely undignified scream of terror as an axe swung out of nowhere and nearly cut my head off; I immediately sank to my knees, unable to support my own weight under the circumstances. Astrid stood over me, predictably, holding the weapon to my throat. I

prepared to see my life flash before my eyes as her sky-blue eyes hardened and she swung the axe back in preparation to execute me.

Sure, Astrid had kissed me a couple times, but she was the kind of girl you didn't take any chances with. I was going to let her make the first moves until I was absolutely, positively sure she would not end my life. And, by the looks of it, that period would end up lasting forever at this point.

"You better start running." Astrid gave me her best evil grin, hefting her battle-axe to her shoulder; I needed no other incentive. I sprinted away as fast as I could, heart racing both in recognition that my life was in danger and for the love of Astrid. If I was very, very lucky, I'd be able to hide and make it back to Berk before she found me.

I was not very, very lucky.

I couldn't have gone more than twenty admittedly huge steps before Astrid ran out in front of me; I skidded to a halt and tried to run the other direction, but she was one step ahead of me and somehow managed to get me in a headlock.

"You are never," she said quietly through grit teeth, after a scary silence, "going to talk about what happened tonight to anyone."

"Yes," I squeaked, voice cracking with relief that she hadn't killed me yet. "Yes. Iâ€"I'll do that. I mean, I won't do that. Wellâ€"Iâ€"

Astrid let me go abruptly, so I of course collapsed on the ground. After a few seconds of trying to summon the strength to pick myself up, I managed to sit up, but was immediately knocked down again with a boot to the diaphragm; she rested her foot on my chest with a satisfied smile. Add 'winded' to the list of everything Astrid has done to me.

A part of me kind of liked the concept of Astrid stepping on me. I shooed the thought out of my head as soon as it materialized.

My expression must have been either helpless or adorable (I prefer to think it was the latter), because Astrid's muscles relaxed. I reacted as quickly as I could and seized the haft of her battle-axe, trying to disarm her, but I ended up pulling her down on top of me. And then we both froze.

Now, Astrid had fallen on me once before during dragon training, but this wasn't anything like that. Then, it was more like a wrestling match, since both our lives were in danger. This time, the situation looked more like this: me, lying motionless on my back in a clearing by a lake, weakly grasping Astrid's hand over her battle-axe while she sat square on my hips with a shocked expression.

Maybe five seconds passed before she scrambled off of me, blushing visibly in the fading light just like I probably was, but they were the longest and most memorable five seconds of my life. They might even have been enjoyable, if I hadn't just been scared half to death.

We didn't speak. I didn't even move. I was too busy trying to wrap my head around what had just happened. My thoughts were made even more confused, though more pleasantly so, when Astrid scooted up next to me and kissed me.

It was a more lingering kiss than the last few, but I wasn't exactly experienced. I just hoped my lips weren't trembling too much, since she had just threatened my life several times. After she pulled away, she grinned shylyâ€”I smiled back hesitantlyâ€”and suddenly buried her battle-axe in the ground next to my head, causing one last rush of terror as she ran away without a word, though I could hear her laughing.

After a few incredibly tense seconds, while I wondered if she would come back, my muscles relaxed; I still lay on the forest floor, thick and springy with moss. The thoughts were rushing through my head too fast for me to focus on any single one, but most of them involved the night's events, and how exactly I would be able to look her in the eye tomorrow. But one single, detached observation shone apart from the rest:

It occurred to me that the stars were especially beautiful tonight.

\*((First \*\*\_\*\*How to Train Your Dragon\*\*\_\*\* fic! This kind of evolved from where I had originally planned, but that's what my fics tend to do.))\*\*

## 2. Tuesday

The first thing I felt the next morning was pain. Specifically, the pain of several blunt spikes stabbing through my thin blanket and digging into my torso. Yelping, I opened my eyes blearily to see some angry, ice-blue eyes staring down at me, probably belonging to Astrid. Actually, definitely belonging to Astrid. That was her stupid skirt I was feeling.

I sat up, which was kind of a mistake, because then my eyes were level with her chest, and getting yourself into that situation is never a good idea when you're a fifteen-year-old guyâ€”especially if you just woke up. "Whoa, hey, Astrid," I managed, yanking my eyes up to her face immediately. "What areâ€”| you doingâ€”| here?"

"Exacting revenge," smiled Astrid, and I lay back again and closed my eyes. It was way too early for thisâ€”it couldn't have been much later than dawn. The least she could do was slay me in my sleep instead of making me wake up and deal with her threats. Last night had been a late one for me, after allâ€”I had spent several hours in the forest, stargazing and trying to sort out what had gone on, was going on, and was likely to go on between us.

"Okay," I mumbled, yawning despite myself; opening my eye a crack, I saw Astrid looking disappointed, and struggled not to smile. As long as I didn't react, she wouldn't kill me. It was just like what Gobber had saidâ€”"play dead, and maybe, just maybe, they won't hurt you."

Of course, I've never had the best of luck. Astrid clambered off my

bed, and I breathed a sigh of relief, closing my eyes completely again and looking forward to a good morning's rest—but I relaxed too soon. She gave me what I thought was a hug (my heart rate increased exponentially) until she dragged me out of bed and down the stairs.

"What are you \_do-o-o-i-i-i-ing\_?" I tried to ask as she hauled me through the door into the cool morning, but Astrid gave no reply but a smug smirk. Trying not to roll my eyes at her vague and sinister plans, I gave up and went limp, which was a mistake.

The next thing I knew, I had been thrown onto Stormfly's tail, and Astrid was lashing me to her dragon with rope, humming to herself as she worked. I frowned at her, fully awake now, as she knotted my hands above my head. "You do know this could kill me, right?"

"Only if I'm not as good a rider as you say," teased Astrid, pausing in her work to smile and make me melt further. "And I am," she added, tying one final knot to secure my chest.

"Just checking," I sighed, resigned to my fate. It occurred to me that I was completely fine with being tied up, especially by Astrid. Maybe that was because my limbs were jelly whenever she was around (most of the time) anyway. I again forced the thought out of my head, sure my father would have something to say about that tendency. Viking men were supposed to be the tough ones, after all.

Stormfly took off, letting out a cry into the dawn—probably gloating that her rider had roped the chief's son to her back, or something stupid like that. I didn't know or care, since I was a little bit tied up with the fact that Stormfly was swishing her tail every which way to keep balance while she flew, and the ropes were loosening.

This was \_not\_ good.

I tilted my head back to look at Astrid riding Stormfly, and almost fell off her dragon for a quite different reason than the first one. Unfortunately, there was no time to admire the view, since I was in imminent danger of falling into the sky.

"Uh, Astrid!" I called, panicking slightly as I slipped farther down Stormfly's tail. "You didn't tie these ropes tight enough," I added, then winced as I realized how that sounded. Oops.

Astrid glanced back with a frown. "Sorry!" she responded, and I could tell she was thinking hard. "I'll try to find somewhere to land," she added; we had headed in the direction of the open ocean. I shut my eyes tightly and tried to hold onto Stormfly, but my fingers were slipping.

I prayed to Odin that after Astrid had almost axed me, strangled me, and crushed me, that hitting the water from this height would \_not\_ be the way I died. Unfortunately, as we all know very well, the gods all hate me, so I started sliding further and further down the dragon. That caused Stormfly to roar in alarm and try to catch the ropes by spikifying her tail.

And \_that\_ caused the spikes to not only cut my ropes completely and

send me falling freely towards the sea, screaming all the way, but also almost puncture several holes inside me. Looking back on it, it was actually a stroke of luck that the spikes at the base of the tail stuck out first, because otherwise I wouldn't have gotten out of the way of the others.

Well, most of the others. I had fallen in such a way that nowâ€”from what I could tell from the haze of pain and terrorâ€”I would have several cuts on my back from the spikes that had scraped me as I tumbled through the empty air.

"Stormfly!" shrieked Astrid, sounding annoyed and actually maybe even frightened for my sake. "Hold on, Hiccup!"

"To what?" I shouted back desperately. It was probably a dumb question. What was worse, it could have been my last words, and \_no one\_ wants their last words to be something like that.

I could almost see Astrid roll her eyes from a hundred feet up.

"Toothless!" I exclaimed; he was standing on a nearby cliff, regarding the situation with unmistakable puzzlement and then alarm. "No, don't," I added weakly, when he looked like he was about to jump off and try to fly over and save me (as usual). \_Would it have been so hard for him to accept my Snoggletog present? It would be so much easier for him to be able to fly on his own!\_

I landed on Stormfly a second later; Astrid had looped around to fly under me, which was great. My vision was still spinning: it took me awhile to distinguish that I was lying with my head in Astrid's lap, and there were several hot, wet, painful scratches down my back that I just knew would scar.

"We gotta get you help," said Astrid, sounding anxious, but her voice seemed to come from very far away. I smiled at her exhaustedly before the pain in my back made my vision go dark, and I blacked out.

The next thing I remember is hearing Astrid's breath in my ear.

"If you pull through, I'll never threaten you again." If she had known I could hear her, she never would have made such an oath. "I'll help you wash your wounds," she continued despairingly. "Anything. Justâ€”please, wake up."

That was the first time I'd ever heard her say 'please'. I must have bled a \_lot\_ if she was that worried.

"Sure," I croaked, and I practically felt her jump as I opened my eyes slowly. It was nighttime; apparently, I had been out the entire day. Astrid sat next to me with a relieved smile on her face, and snatched her hand away from my head; I suspected she had been ruffling my hair while I was asleep. I grimaced as I shifted slightly and my cuts ached, then heard Toothless bound up next to me with a worried growl and was promptly greeted with a giant tongue to the face.

"I missed you too," I laughed weakly, before turning back uncertainly to the girl that had almost killed me. "Now, if you'll excuse me, Astrid, it's my bathtime. I can wash my own wounds, thanks." I

couldn't suppress my resentment; technically, this was all Astrid's fault. Fortunately for me, she didn't argue, just bowed her head and walked out, looking apologetic.

I'd probably eventually apologize, myself, even though none of that had anything to do with me. I couldn't stand seeing Astrid like that, after all. Call it a weakness.

When I was absolutely sure the room was deserted save for myself and Toothless, and that the shutters were shut, I set to work getting my bath ready, which took a lot longer than usual with my injuries. Eventually, I managed to get the water in the tub and get myself into the water.

Stupidly, I tried to feel the cuts on my back, wondering if I'd needed stitches—and thinking I probably should have checked before I got into the water. I yelped as the wounds stung; no, they were pretty shallow: no stitches required. I breathed a sigh of relief, then put my mind to how exactly I could possibly get Astrid back. The girl had almost succeeded in killing me today. It was about time I return the favor or, at the very least, weasel an 'I'm sorry' out of her. Probably the latter. Everyone knew I couldn't hold my own in a fight against her.

It was going to be a long, thoughtful night—|

\*(Bit more serious than the last chapter, but I hope I didn't overdo the serious. If I update this, I should warn you—it's going to be irregular.))\*

### 3. Wednesday

"Rise and shine, Toothless." I hobbled towards my dragon, wincing from the cuts on my back, and poked his snout. He opened a sleepy eye, looking at me reproachfully: It's not even light yet. Go away.

But I was adamant. I couldn't exactly move comfortably, so I really needed him to carry me places, and I also needed to be up before Astrid so I could get revenge. I'll admit vengeance is kind of a weird concept to me, since I've always been trampled by every other kid in the village, but it felt good to think about what I could do to repay Astrid for almost killing me.

And I had just the thing.

"Come on, buddy," I whispered, rubbing his head. "You know Astrid almost killed me yesterday. I'm gonna get her back." His eyes snapped open immediately, and he growled a little under his breath. With some help from my dragon, I clambered onto Toothless and directed him (on land) to Stormfly's shed.

I slid off Toothless, groaning, and opened up the shed doors as quietly as possible. Stormfly approached cautiously, and if I wasn't mistaken, there was shame or apology in her demeanor—but maybe I was just imagining things, since most dragons besides Night Furies generally look the same most of the time.

"Hey, girl," I murmured, extending my hand. "I'm not going to hurt

you. We're just going to play a little joke on Astrid, okay?" Her dragon jerked her head back uncertainly, but I smiled as I kept talking. "You know she scared me half to death yesterday, and you accidentally scratched me another quarter of the way there. I think I deserve a chance to scare her like that, too."

Stormfly and Toothless both eyed me with apprehension. I shrugged, then winced at the motion. "Come \_on\_," I grumbled after an awkward pause as the two dragons stared at me. "I'm not going to do anything stupid. Stormfly, I need you to fly somewhere she can't find you. Come back when it's sunset."

When nothing happened, I added frustratedly, "It's going to be like a littleâ€¦ dragon vacation. Go fishing. Raze Mildew's old house. Drop Snotlout in the ocean. Do whatever you want."

Astrid's dragon exchanged a glance and a few odd noises with Toothless, then abruptly spread her wings and flew off into the sunrise. I smiled, then left the shed doors ajar. "Toothless," I grinned. "If she says it would be impossible for Stormfly to get out, you can take the blame for me."

Toothless grumbled and headbutted me, knocking me painfully to the ground, before remembering that I wasn't in great shape; his eyes widened in almost comical concern as he yanked me equally abruptly to my feet. Stars swam in my vision as I tried not to scream in pain. The other kids had either not gotten real wounds, or hadn't gotten big ones, because this was nowhere near as fun as they made it sound.

"You can stay here," I added, as I walked through Astrid's door and struggled up the stairs to her room. I probably wouldn't wake her like she had woken me, since that seemed like a generally bad idea, but I was definitely going to wake her and say that I saw Stormfly flying into the distance.

Well, I \_was\_, till I saw how placid she looked in the dim light of the rising sun. A smile crept onto my face as I noticed that she slept in a woolen pink-dyed nightgownâ€¦ "I could use this as blackmail. Well, that wasn't my \_first\_ thought, because that nightgown was kind of low cut compared to her normal outfit.

"A-Astrid?" I asked softly, after a few minutes of quiet. It was probably creepy to watch her sleep, but I wasn't watching her because she was asleep so much as because she looked so unusually peaceful.

"Astrid," I said, more loudly, as I approached. When there was still no response, I hesitantly grasped both her wrists in case she reacted by punching me; her eyes snapped open and she struggled for a moment before registering that it was me. Probably because no other Viking was as skinny as me.

"Hiccup?" asked Astrid, and I could tell she was blushing as she grabbed my wrists weakly, reversing the situation. "You can't justâ€¦ I was \_asleep\_! How could youâ€¦"

"Yeah, and I was asleep yesterday morning when you \_sat \_on me," I retorted, annoyed. "And I would have slept a lot better last night if



you hadn't tied me to your dragon and given me a bunch of scars. Which reminds me," I added, wrenching my wrists away from hers, "Stormfly's gone."

"Gone?" repeated Astrid, narrowing her eyes suspiciously. "What do you mean, gone? Like you released her? She can't have gotten out on her own."

"No!" I exclaimed; I was a terrible liar, but I somehow managed to remove most of the guilt from my voice by thinking about how much Astrid deserved this. "I saw Toothless by the shed, though," I added. "They probably had a little dragon talk about what you did yesterday and decided to deprive you of your ride." I couldn't suppress a smile at the thought of a 'dragon talk'.

"You think that's funny?" exclaimed Astrid, and I think she was seriously considering punching me. "I don't have a dragon anymore! How long is she going to be gone?" she demanded. I shrugged. "Argh! You are the least helpful person I have ever met! Now get out!" I frowned, unsure of her urgency, before Astrid picked up her spiky skirt and raised her eyebrow. "Unless you want me to change in front of your dead body," she added, taking a step towards me threateningly. My eyes widened and I got out in as much of a hurry as I could muster.

"Well, Toothless," I smiled wearily. "Mission accomplished."

\*\*(Bit of an abrupt end, I think, but it's gonna go on forever if I don't cut it here.)\*\*

#### 4. Thursday

It would have been enjoyable for me to have Astrid's head resting on my shoulder— if we hadn't stayed up all night waiting for Stormfly to come back. The sun was already rising.

"Something's wrong," I murmured to Toothless, who was curled protectively around us as we sat on the highest point of Berk. "I mean, really wrong. You heard me tell her 'sunset', right? Stormfly's a smart dragon. She knows how much she means to Astrid."

At the sound of her name, Astrid jolted awake, then realized her head was resting on my shoulder and punched me (though much more gently than usual in light of my back injury). "So now what, genius? You said she'd be back by sunset." I had admitted I'd had something to do with Stormfly's disappearance at axepoint yesterday. She had said, If Stormfly turns up safely by the end of today, I'll let you live. It was tomorrow. I was going to die. Again.

"Your death threats are getting a little old," I murmured, following my own mental path to arrive at that conclusion. Astrid frowned and tilted her head to the side, and I smiled a little, shaking my own. "Sorry. Yeah, I don't know what's going on with her. Toothless?" I asked; my dragon swished his tail in reply. "Let's go look for Stormfly." Astrid leapt to her feet and climbed onto Toothless instantly, but at least had the decency to wait the minute or so it took me to get up and stretch the stiffness out of my bones (gritting my teeth in pain) and mount my dragon.

"All right, Toothless," I sighed. "We have a dragon to find."

The flight wasn't exactly comfortable. This was only the second time I had flown since Astrid had almost killed me, after all. But \_no one\_ deserved to lose their dragon, so I persevered. Tail spikes or no tail spikes, Stormfly's reptilian heart was in the right place.

An hour passed, then two hours. Wherever Stormfly was, she wasn't on Berk; we'd checked all around the island, then looked closer into every dragonesque hiding place. No nadders.

Toothless searched faithfully alongside us, but every time we soared back into the sky again, he seemed to want to ride the air current out of the area. I'd check that out as soon as we found Stormfly; since he wasn't being that insistent about it, it couldn't be that important.

"What if she's on Outcast Island?" asked Astrid after we'd searched everywhere, squeezing the breath out of my lungs with worry. "We have to go help her!"

"Jumpingâ€”toâ€”conclusions," I gasped, removing her hands from my waist. "She might be on that island with the hot springs, where she laid the eggs last Snoggletog."

Astrid shook her head in my peripheral vision. "No," she sighed. "According to the \_Book of Dragons\_, dragons only have babies every couple years. She can't be there. Or at least, not for that reason."

"No harm in checking," I said, as cheerfully as I could manage with Astrid glaring at me, and directed Toothless towards the open sea. It was about the most awkward flight I could imagine at first, since neither of us spoke, but eventually I decided to tell Astrid something that had been bugging meâ€”since she was kind of a captive audience.

"Astrid, why do you keep trying to kill me?"

She didn't answer.

I sighed and turned my head to look at her; she wouldn't meet my eyes. "It's a simple enough question. I already know what you're capable of. You don't have to prove anything to me. And it's not like \_I've\_ done anything to \_you\_. Iâ€”| don't think it's physically possible."

Astrid frowned. "Iâ€”| I don't know," she managed eventually. "I guess I'm so used to beating everyone up, I justâ€”| can't think of what \_else\_ to do."

"We could, I don't know, talk," I suggested, trying to maintain a straight face. "Or dance, or stargaze, or whatever normal couples \_do\_ around Berk, besides kill each other."

"We're not a couple," snapped Astrid, and I braced myself, but all that came was a pause, and then a soft phrase. "I'm glad you're here," she sighed, leaning against my back. I stiffened, trying not to cry out; she had clearly forgotten about how sensitive that area was after what she accidentally did to it.

"Yeah"well"nice change," I replied through grit teeth; Astrid realized what was going on and picked herself up in a hurry. I heaved a sigh of relief, which was sharply cut off by Toothless swerving to avoid something huge flying towards us.

And then a lot more huge somethings flying towards us.

"Dragons!" yelled Astrid; we plunged down, dodging the flurry of limbs and wings, until we almost hit the ocean. Looking up, I could barely believe my eyes: a flock of dragons soared above us, the like of which I hadn't seen since Snoggletog. \_Maybe she \_was \_laying eggs.\_

"I bet Stormfly was one of them!" I exclaimed, bringing Toothless back up to the sky as the dragons passed behind us. "But where were they coming from?" I wondered aloud, sailing over the peak on the island. It didn't look like anything special, but if this many dragons had assembled, it had to have been important

Then it clicked.

"Dragons lay eggs only every other year, right?" I asked, turning to Astrid (who was still trying to find Stormfly among the dragons in the distance) with a smile on my face. "Well, those eggs have to get made somehow," I finished awkwardly. I'd never been so glad I'd missed seeing something firsthand.

Astrid blinked. "Oh," she said, unreadably. "I think"we'd better go home."

The flight home was even more awkward than the flight there, but only for Astrid. I was busy trying to ask Toothless why he hadn't pounced on the opportunity. I wasn't going to pretend that baby Night Furies wouldn't be the cutest things I'd ever seen. But Toothless smacked me with his lobe, and I relented. Apparently, it was a sensitive subject.

It was only noon when we got back to Berk, but it felt like we had been out all day. I stifled a yawn as I landed Toothless in front of Astrid's house, around which Stormfly paced anxiously; she let out a cry of relief and raced towards us. Astrid leapt off Toothless to give her dragon a bear hug; I smiled. Astrid \_did\_ have a heart.

"I'm going to bed," I announced, turning Toothless towards my house, but before we could dash away, Astrid ran up next to me and almost pulled me off my dragon as she kissed my cheek. No beating preceded or followed it, however, and my heart soared dizzily like a flock of dragons.

"Maybe later we can talk, or dance, or stargaze!" she called after me, and I gave her a wide smile as Toothless carried me home. I'd definitely be taking her up on that.

\*((Bit less tense, I think!))\*

End  
file.